

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 143

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 95

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 143—Relative to the Buffalo Soldiers.

[Filed with Secretary of State July 15, 2014.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 143, Bigelow. Buffalo Soldiers: Yosemite National Park.

This measure would recognize the legacy of the Buffalo Soldiers and would honor the important role they played in the history of our national parks.

WHEREAS, In 1866, Congress created six segregated regiments that were ultimately consolidated into four Black regiments: the 9th and 10th Cavalry and the 24th and 25th Infantry; and

WHEREAS, African American army regiments that had been dispatched westward fought in the Indian Wars and these soldiers were eventually given the name Buffalo Soldiers by the Cheyenne and other Plains Indians; and

WHEREAS, Although historians have recorded the service of these Buffalo Soldiers on the western frontier, their service in some national parks has been nearly forgotten; and

WHEREAS, The United States Army served as the official administrator of Yosemite and Sequoia National Parks between 1891 and 1913. In that capacity, it helped create a model for park management as we know it today; and

WHEREAS, Buffalo Soldiers were among the first park rangers and backcountry rangers patrolling parts of the west; and

WHEREAS, Approximately 500 Buffalo Soldiers, mainly from the 24th Infantry and 9th Cavalry, served in Yosemite National Park and Sequoia National Park. Their duties ranged from evicting poachers and timber thieves to extinguishing forest fires. They also oversaw the construction of roads, trails, and other infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, Commanding officers of the United States Army became acting military superintendents for these national parks with two troops of cavalry assigned to each park. Each troop would be made up of approximately 60 men; and

WHEREAS, The presence of these troops invigorated the local economy and the soldiers acting as official stewards of park lands brought a sense of law and order to the mountain wilderness; and

WHEREAS, Among their many accomplishments, the troops assigned to Yosemite National Park oversaw the building of an arboretum near the south fork of the Merced River in 1904. One scholar considered the area to

contain the first marked nature trail in the United States' national park system; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature recognizes the legacy of the Buffalo Soldiers and honors the important role they played in the history of our national parks; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.